



# A look inside Ketchikan’s Deer Mountain hatchery

Two people and 500,000 kings

By BILLY SINGLETON  
KETCHIKAN DAILY NEWS

**KETCHIKAN** — Nestled along Ketchikan Creek next to City Park is a small building that produces more than 500,000 king salmon per year. Run by a two-person team, Deer Mountain Hatchery is the Southern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association’s only hatchery dedicated solely to king salmon.

In the culmination of the hatchery’s biggest project of the year, 400,000 of those kings were transported by boat two weeks ago to upper Carroll Inlet, where they will be released into the ocean in mid-May.



DUSTIN SAFRANEK | KETCHIKAN DAILY NEWS  
Logan Collins removes incubation trays containing king salmon fry that are ready for transfer into a raceway for start-up feeding at Whitman Lake hatchery in Ketchikan.

Looking at the life cycle of these fish says a lot about what the hatchery does. This particular group of king salmon began as eggs in August 2016. SSRAA harvested a batch of roughly 2.5 million eggs from kings returning to the nearby Whitman Lake Hatchery, where

they were fertilized and placed in incubators for about nine months. By the following April, the tiny fish had hatched and developed into fry — meaning that they were mature enough to be held in raceways and to feed on commercial fish food, rather than their yolk sacks.

Half a million of the fry were transported to Deer Mountain Hatchery. Here, they spent the better part of a year swimming in fresh-water circular tanks, which continuously circulate the water and allow the fish to exercise. This spring, rising temperatures and light levels

signaled to the young fish that it was time to transition to salt water, just as they would in the wild. The kings’ transition to the ocean began about two weeks ago. Over the course of several mornings, the fish were pumped from an outdoor raceway, through a tube and into a metal tanker truck that previously had been used to carry de-icing fluid at Ketchikan International Airport. The truck carried the fish to a dock at the Alaska General Seafoods plant on Stedman Street, where the fish were gravity fed into the hull of a boat, the Linda. With a few SSRAA staff members onboard, the Linda made the trip to SSRAA’s remote release site near the Swan Lake Power Station in upper Carroll Inlet.

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CARL UCHTYL  
CBJ Ports and Harbors director

## SHIP:

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5,000 total passengers and crew members with another new mega-ship, Royal Caribbean’s Ovation of the Sea (5,000-plus passengers) set to sail to Alaska next year.

Koelsch said because of “mega-ship” trend, preparing for the future is key. “We have to stay ahead of the planning curve,” Koelsch said. “We have to make sure we have the infrastructure here to support this. The other part is that we have to make sure people who live here have access to the places they want to go to and the people coming here have a very good visit.”

This year’s passenger numbers are projected to set a record for Juneau tourism. About 27.2 million people are expected to cruise worldwide this year, according to the Cruise Line Industry Association. CLIA projected 1.17 million passengers will visit Alaska through the end of the tourist season which ends on Oct. 2. Next year, CLIA expects a jump to 1.31 million cruise line passengers in Alaska. Cruise ship passengers spent \$176.6 million in Juneau in 2017 and CLIA projects they will spend more than \$200 million in 2019.

While the Bliss is the largest boat in scope of size it is not much larger than two other boats that have docked in Juneau. The Celebrity Solstice (1,033 feet) and the Explorer of the Sea (1,025 feet) are only slightly shorter, according to Travel Juneau’s 2018 Juneau Cruise Ship Statistics. The Explorer of the Sea can accommodate slightly more passengers at 4,029 compared to the Bliss’s 4,004, but has less crew members at 1,180 to the Bliss’s 1,716. On average cruise ships that dock in Juneau have a passenger range of approximately 3,500, said Liz Perry President and CEO of Travel Juneau.

The Bliss, according to the Norwegian Cruise Line website, is the company’s newest boat and features “revolutionary observation lounge” built specifically for passengers to take in scenery of Alaska. Tuesday will also mark the first of 17 visits from the Bliss this year. Its last docking will be Sept. 25.

CBJ Port Director Carl Uchtyl said the main difference Juneau residents should notice, besides more people walking around, is the number of buses transporting people from the AJ Dock location to downtown or to specific destinations.

“There is always a rush of people leaving the ships, but with the extra buses that should soften the blow,” Uchtyl said. “Hopefully, it will just be business as usual. We should just be able to appreciate the additional revenue the passengers bring in.”

## TREE:

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fearful way about what the future’s going to be like as we grow our population and deplete our natural resources,” Thompson said. “Alaska’s the school, it’s the stronghold of doing things right.” Sunday’s excursion to Berners Bay to see the petroglyphs was one aspect of the whole conference, which includes speeches, trips to sacred Alaska Native sites and brainstorming sessions. Thompson said he hopes this conference, which runs from this past Saturday to Wednesday, becomes a “moment we’ll remember” when the two groups took action — in preserving the environment, culture and language of their peoples — for the sake of future generations.

Midway through the time when the passengers of the Allen Marine catamaran were exploring the woods, Lt. Gov. Byron Mallott arrived, driving a small motorboat. He spoke with a few guests, finding time to take in the area’s beauty and even skip stones into the water. More than two decades ago, Mallott was a key figure in uniting Alaska Natives of Southeast together with the Polynesian Voyaging Society. In 1989, Thompson and the organization undertook an ambitious endeavor, looking to reconstruct a double-hulled canoe in traditional native fashion. They named the vessel Hawai’iloa, a voyager of legend who is credited with the discovery of Hawaii.

They were struggling to find logs in Hawaii that were large enough for the hulls, according to the



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Goldbelt Foundation Vice Chairwoman Katherine Eldemar (right) speaks as Polynesian Voyaging Society representatives Nainoa Thompson (left) and Lehua Kamalu (middle) listen.

Hawai’iloa website, due to forestry and cattle grazing. Fortunately, Thompson was able to connect with Mallott, who was then the CEO of the Sealaska Corporation, through mutual friends. Mallott helped coordinate the use of Sitka spruce logs for the hull of the vessel.

During Sunday’s excursion, Thompson called the collaboration between the two organizations “a beautiful story.” He reiterated the point that people elsewhere can learn from the way Alaskans have taken care of their natural resources.

The harmony between the people and the wildlife in the area was a theme of the excursion. As Tlingit elder David Katzeek was telling stories to the group on the way out to Berners Bay, killer whales were spotted near the boat. He stopped his storytelling and began to sing to the whales. One of them leapt out of the water soon after Katzeek stopped singing.

“They’re dancing for us,” Katzeek said. “I should probably sing again.”

Another such moment happened as people disembarked the catamaran onto the beach. Tlingit leader Fran Houston was among the first to come ashore, and said she im-

mediately asked the ancestors of the area (as the beach used to be the site of a village) for permission to be there. “I got my answer,” Houston told the group, pointing toward a tall spruce to the north of the beach. “There are two eagles at the top of that tree.”

They were watching over the group, Houston said. The eagles sat there for the next hour or so, flying away just before the group got back onto the catamaran. On the beach, Houston led a song to welcome the visitors to the area — a song entitled Cha Dat Sa, the meaning of which she declined to share. The Hawaiian visitors also sang a song, Thompson said, called Ahu Nua traditionally used to ask permission.

These instances, as well as the maintained petroglyphs and efforts to revitalize the Lingit language, have stuck with Thompson during his visits to Alaska since the 1990s, he said.

“I wish that we can make more and more people around the world see the stories of Alaska, because this is an important school,” Thompson said. “This is more important of a school for the earth than Alaska’s ever been.”

## John Active dies at 69

By MARK THIESSEN  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

**ANCHORAGE** — An Alaska Native broadcaster who helped preserve the Yup’ik language and culture one story at a time died Monday. John Active was 69.

Active worked at KYUK public radio and television stations in Bethel for about 47 years, translating the day’s news from English to Yup’ik and vice versa and hosting talk programs, said KYUK general manager Shane Iverson, who confirmed Active’s death. The cause of death wasn’t immediately known, but Iverson said Active had

been in failing health.

Active typically began newscasts by telling a story in the native language. Often these were Yup’ik stories related to him in his youth by his grandmother, tales like “How the Fox Turned Red” and “How the Crane Got Its Blue Eyes,” U.S. Sen. Dan Sullivan said when honoring Active on the floor of the Senate a few months ago upon Active’s retirement.

“He was an incredible storyteller and he held on to a lot of stories that might have been lost or simply not shared, so I think just sharing was one of his greatest virtues,” Iverson said.

## STAB:

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“The 41 year old male reported the 35 year old male approached him, challenged him to fight, and then punched him on the side of the head,” Lt. Krag Campbell said in a release. “In response, the 41 year old male pulled out the knife and stabbed the 35 year old male, once in the abdomen.”

Police detained and interviewed the 41-year-old, but released him without making any arrests.

“We did not find a probable cause that a crime had been committed,” Campbell said in a phone interview with the Empire Monday. He added that the case is still under investigation. Alcohol appears to be a factor in the case as well.

Eyewitnesses reported the stabbing to police about 5:30 p.m. Sunday.

The stabbing victim, who was not on scene when police and EMTs arrived, was located in the 200 block of South Franklin Street and taken to Bartlett Regional Hospital. The man sustained serious injuries, but was in stable condition as of Monday morning.

## FIRE:

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firefighters at the scene, but a team will go back to the site of the fire later this week and do an assessment hoping to find out a cause for the fire.

This marks the sixth, and largest fire, in the Juneau area this year. While fires are not necessarily an unusually occurrence in the area, one of this size is, Robbins said. “The numbers of fires

is not too odd,” Robbins said. “But to have a fire this size is definitely different. A 56-acre fire is pretty significant.”

Before the fire at Antler Bay, the largest fire in the area occurred at Lucky Me, south of Juneau, and was 1.5 acres by comparison, Robbins said. The rest of the fires were all approximately one-tenth of an acre. Those particular fires were campfires that were found burning beyond their ring, Robbins said.

Antler Flats is in the northeast section of Berners Bay at the end of the Antler River.

## TODAY’S #



Extra-Tuff Bingo Contest Rules:

juneauempire.com/bingo

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